

Schindler, Pam

From: michaellila@aim.com
Sent: Friday, March 06, 2009 10:51 AM
To: Schindler, Pam
Subject: Letter to support HB 372

March 6th, 2009

Mr. /Ms. Chairman, members of the committee,

My name is Lila Michael, I am a Bozeman resident.

I am writing this email to urge you to support HB 372.

HB 372 will extend the undue hardship exemptions from jury duty to include breast-feeding mothers and primary caregivers to dependent persons.

In 2004 I had the unique experience of being a new mother to a beautiful, healthy, baby girl (whom I was breastfeeding), and also the painful and stressful experience of helping my dear elderly mother through yet another stay in the hospital because of her battle with Parkinson's disease.

My father was also incapacitated because of a winter time knee surgery, so the burden to care for all three fell to me. My sister is in New York, so I am the only family my folks had in Bozeman. If I was to have been called in for jury duty, I would have had to plead hardship. I can't imagine what would have happened if I had been told that I must serve while my family needed me so desperately.

I take my duty as a citizen of Montana and America very seriously. I am willing and proud to serve when called to jury duty. However, when babies are exclusively breast fed it is what I would consider undue hardship to leave the baby for any length of time. Having a nursing infant in the court room would probably not work either.

People who care for dependants are also at a disadvantage. Often we have limited resources and cannot afford expensive caregivers. I needed to be with my folks in their time of dire need. I was very glad I was able to do this for them.

Please pass HB 372 to insure that breastfeeding mothers and primary care givers can serve their families. Keep Montana babies and mothers safe from undue stress during the brief time when nursing is most vital. Support families who are going through difficult times dealing with serious illness.

Thank you so much for your time and service to Montana. I appreciate all the work you do.

Lila Michael

Bozeman, MT

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3/6/2009